Book of Mormon Tree Of Life Vision: BoM Keynote Address

I have felt for many years the Tree of Life vision is the "Keynote" address of the Book of Mormon (of course the Title Page tells us the two purposes of the Book of Mormon). Lehi's words in blue below are used in this post. I will also endeavor to share insights about this subject.

1 Nephi 8
*5)And it came to pass that I saw **a man**, and he was dressed in a white robe; and he came and stood before me.*
*6)And it came to pass that he spake unto me, and bade me **follow him**.*
*7)And it came to pass that as I followed him, and after I had followed him, (original version) **I beheld myself** that I was in a dark and dreary waste.*
*8)And after I had traveled for the space of **many hours in darkness**, I began to **pray unto the Lord that he would have mercy on me**, according to the multitude of his tender mercies.*

IMO... anytime we follow a man or men we will eventually discover we made a bad decision (perhaps after it is too late), and we are in darkness. Lehi came to himself, and realized his dilemma. The Lord is ever willing to have mercy on those who sincerely come to Him in prayer.

9)And it came to pass after I had prayed unto the Lord I beheld a large and spacious field.
*10)And it came to pass that **I beheld a tree**, whose fruit was **desirable to make one happy**.*
*11)And it came to pass that I did go forth and **partake of the fruit** thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, **above all that I ever before tasted**. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that **I had ever seen**.*
*12)And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with **exceedingly** great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that **my family should partake** of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit...*
*15)And it came to pass that I beckoned unto them; and I also did say unto them with **a loud voice** that they should come unto me, and **partake of the fruit**, which was desirable above all other fruit...*

As Lehi surveys the world, the thing that catches his attention is the Tree of Life. That is a characteristic we should all emulate. What catches our attention?

If after experiencing the fruit that gives permanent happiness, do we understand it is a goal we should strive for with all our might all the remaining days of our life? Do we lay that

endeavor aside because it requires too much of us? Shouldn't we be willing to take up our cross daily, and continue in doing that which gave us happiness from the Lord originally? Is any mortal more important to us than our family?

IMO the devil and his minions are ever trying to pull us off the path to the tree with counterfeit works and words. If the Book of Mormon gave us a love of God by feasting upon it, should we give heed to anything or anyone else that purports to downgrade or supersede it?

*19)And I beheld **a rod of iron**, and it extended along the bank of the river, and **led to the tree by which I stood.***

As Lehi looks back after Sariah, Nephi, and Sam came to him, he sees a rod of iron. This rod was not in place as Lehi made it to the tree. Neither was it part of Nephi's journey. Why is that? Perhaps this rod of iron was put in place by the trailblazers Lehi and Nephi. Also notice that Lehi stands by the tree and beckons. Perhaps there is reason the rod was made of iron. Perhaps the people he saw in vision were all his family. He continues:

*20)And I also beheld **a strait and narrow path**, which **came along by the rod of iron**, even to the tree **by which I stood**; and it also led by the head of the fountain, unto a large and spacious field, as if it had been **a world**.*
*21)And I saw **numberless concourses** of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree **by which I stood**.*
*22)And it came to pass that they did come forth, and **commence** in the path which led to the tree.*
*23)And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even **an exceedingly great mist of darkness**, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path **did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost.***
*24)And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of **the end of the rod of iron**; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, **clinging** to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree.*
*25)And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree they did cast their eyes about as if **they were ashamed**.*

Notice how many try to get into and stay on the path without the rod of iron being part of their effort. Their end is to lose their way. Then there are those who actually *cling* to the rod, but they are eventually ashamed.

So, a few conclusions: if the rod of iron is not integrated as a part of our being, we cannot make it to the tree. Also, if we simply *cling* to the rod (use it as it is convenient; perhaps with as little effort as possible), in the end we will be ashamed of the Book of Mormon; or relegate it to not be important as other works, words, and people. Continuing on:

*26)And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, **high above the earth**.*
*27)And it was **filled** with people, **both old and young, both male and female**; and **their manner of dress was exceedingly fine**; and they were in the attitude of **mocking and pointing their fingers**towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit.*
*28)And after they had **tasted** of the fruit they were ashamed, **because of those that were scoffing** at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost.*

It appears that the tower of Babel is still alive. Especially in our day when huge "skyscrapers" are common and appear high in the air. Those that inhabit these structures are more likely to dress well, and be willing to share stories, etc., to make fun of those who simply want to love God. Those not grounded in the iron rod (BoM) will fall away.

*30)But, to be short in writing, behold, he saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and **they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree**...*
*33)And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building. And after they did enter into that building they did point the finger of scorn at me and those that were partaking of the fruit also; but **we heeded them not**.*

Notice those who made it to the tree holding fast to the iron rod were so happy that they fell down and worshipped (I suppose). If the Book of Mormon is in fact the rod of iron (and I stand by that assumption), can anything or anyone else be substituted for it? Will we give heed to the scoffers, the wise, and the learned, false prophets, teachers, etc., etc., until we doubt the Book of Mormon's validity or think it not worthy of our attention on a daily basis?

The Tree of Life vision given to Lehi is IMO the "Keynote" address of the Book of Mormon. Nephi's words are in purple which were given by the Spirit and the angel that explained and amplified Lehi's vision. I will endeavor to share insights about this subject. [NOTE: original BoM is used in places instead of the changes we inherited.]

1 Nephi 11
*8)And it came to pass that the Spirit said unto me: Look! And I looked and beheld a tree; and it was like unto the tree which my father had seen; and the beauty thereof was **far beyond, yea, exceeding of all beauty**; and the whiteness thereof did exceed the whiteness of the driven snow...*
14)And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, what beholdest thou?
*15)And I said unto him: **A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins**.*
16)And he said unto me: Knowest thou the condescension of God?
17)And I said unto him: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the

meaning of all things.
18)And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of God (original document), after the manner of the flesh...
20)And I looked and beheld ***the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms****.*
21)And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father! (original document) Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw?
22)And I answered him, saying: Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things.
23)And he spake unto me, saying: Yea, and the most joyous to the soul.

To love God is to know who He is and what He has done for us and what He offers us. It is -- in the end -- the most desirable of all things. He condescended to come down as a baby. He was born of a virgin (Note: Mary is considered to still be a virgin after the birth of God).

24)And after he had said these words, he said unto me: Look! And I looked, and I beheld the Son of God going forth among the children of men; and I saw many ***fall down at his feet and worship him****.*
25)And it came to pass that I beheld that ***the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life****; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God.*
26)And the angel said unto me again: Look and behold the condescension of God!
27)And I looked and beheld the Redeemer of the world, of whom my father had spoken; and I also beheld the prophet who should prepare the way before him. And the Lamb of God went forth and was baptized of him; and after he was baptized, I beheld the heavens open, and the Holy Ghost come down out of heaven and abide upon him in the form of a dove.
28)And I beheld that ***he went forth ministering unto the people, in power and great glory; and the multitudes were gathered together to hear him; and I beheld that they cast him out from among them...***
32)And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me again, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, ***the everlasting God*** *was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record.*
33)And I, Nephi, saw that he was lifted up upon the cross and ***slain for the sins of the world****...*
35)And ***the multitude of the earth*** *was gathered together; and I beheld that* ***they were in a large and spacious building****, like unto the building which my father saw. And the angel of the Lord spake unto me again, saying: Behold* ***the world and the wisdom thereof****; yea, behold the house of Israel hath gathered together to fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*
36)And it came to pass that I saw and bear record, that ***the great and spacious building was the pride of the world****; and it fell, and the fall thereof was exceedingly great....*

Do we comprehend the condescension of God? He chose to minister and help all. He chose to die for us if will choose Him.

1 Nephi 12

16)And the angel spake unto me, saying: Behold the fountain of filthy water which thy father saw; yea, even the river of which he spake; and the depths thereof are ***the depths of hell****.*
17)And ***the mists of darkness are the temptations of the devil, which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost****.*
18)And ***the large and spacious building, which thy father saw, is vain imaginations and the pride of the children of men****. And a great and a terrible gulf divideth them; yea, even the sword of the justice of the Eternal God and Jesus Christ which is the Lamb of God, (original document) of whom the Holy Ghost beareth record, from the beginning of the world until this time, and from this time henceforth and forever.*

2 Nephi 31

19)And now, my beloved brethren, ***after*** *ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by* ***the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him*** *who is mighty to save.*
*20)****Wherefore****, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and* ***a love of God*** *and of all men.* ***Wherefore****, if ye shall press forward,* ***feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end****, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.*
21)And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and ***there is none other way*** *nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold,* ***this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine*** *of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen.*

Bottom line brethren: we **MUST** choose to **hold fast** to the vehicle which opened our eyes to the true God, Jesus Christ. We **MUST press forward feasting on the BoM and endure to the end**. This is the way Christ gave us in the last days to come unto Him. We CANNOT go wrong in incorporating the Book of Mormon into our beings. We SHALL go astray and be lost if we don't. Believe Christ, not men.